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MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
BETWEEN

THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC  
AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

AND

THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION /  
ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS

*Rio de Janeiro*  
*29 May 2010*

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**Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United  
Nations Organization / Alliance of Civilizations**

The United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

**AND**

The United Nations Organization /  
Alliance of Civilizations

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hereinafter referred to as "UNESCO"

hereinafter referred to as "AoC"

Represented by its  
Director-General

Represented by  
the High Representative of  
the Secretary-General of  
the United Nations

Irina Bokova

  
Jorge Sampaio

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization  
(hereafter "UNESCO") and  
the Alliance of Civilizations (hereafter "AoC")  
are hereinafter referred to together as "the Parties"  
to this Memorandum of Understanding.

## Article I – Introduction

The Director-General of UNESCO and the High Representative of AoC, convinced that the current global challenges require urgent attention and action to ensure peaceful coexistence, harmony and interaction among peoples of different cultural backgrounds, through the promotion of dialogue among cultures, hereby agree to enter into the present Memorandum of Understanding (hereafter "MoU").

## Article II – Context

**Whereas** UNESCO, as a specialized agency of the United Nations entrusted with the mandate to build the defenses of peace in the minds of men and women, undertakes and stimulates at the international, regional, sub-regional and national levels and with multi-stakeholder involvement a broad-based dialogue among cultures, including, interfaith dialogue, aimed at responding to a range of global challenges, promoting cultural diversity and contributing to reconciliation and peace through sectoral and intersectoral action drawing on education, the sciences, culture and communication and information;

**Whereas** AoC, as an initiative of the United Nations, aims to build bridges between societies, promote dialogue and understanding, forge collective political will to address growing divisions between societies and restore mutual respect between peoples of differing cultures, traditions and religions, inspiring them to mobilize behind concrete measures to achieve these goals;

**Whereas** UNESCO and AoC consider that encouraging intercultural dialogue and creating conditions conducive thereto are essential responsibilities belonging to all levels of public authority, civil society, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and each citizen;

**Whereas** UNESCO and AoC are determined to pursue joint efforts with a view to improving relations between peoples of differing cultures, religions and traditions so as to counter emerging tendencies of extremism, to favor mutual understanding and respect, to increase confidence, and, more broadly, to help resolve issues that may divide peoples;

**Whereas** UNESCO and AoC have laid the foundations for cooperation and complementary action since the conclusion of their first MoU signed in January 2008;

**The Parties hereby agree to the following:**



### Article III – Overarching Objectives

By the present MoU, the Parties confirm their commitment to promote jointly dialogue among cultures and civilizations and related initiatives with a view to strengthening mutual understanding, tolerance, respect, peaceful coexistence, co-operation, development and a rapprochement of cultures, ultimately contributing to a culture of peace. In so doing, **the Parties agree to:**

1. Undertake jointly global initiatives and advocacy efforts pertaining to the dialogue of cultures, especially during the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures 2010. In addition, collaborate within the framework of the *International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding (12 August 2010 - 11 August 2011)* to implement the UN-wide action plan for this international year in a manner that leverages each Party's value-added in efforts to advance "the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples".
2. Strengthen and intensify their existing cooperation and partnership and drawing on mutual synergies and complementarities, through the exchange of information and the implementation of strategies, projects and activities jointly elaborated and undertaken by them pursuant to this MoU, with progress being reviewed through regular contacts between UNESCO and UNAOC designated programme officers;
3. Integrate a multi-stakeholder approach into their joint endeavours that includes, *inter alia*, other international, regional and sub-regional organisations, public authorities at all levels, civil society, media, non-governmental organizations and the private sector as essential actors in the dialogue among cultures and civilizations;
4. Respect the principles enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, giving priority to the pursuit of gender equality and fostering the involvement of youth in all actions undertaken;
5. Initiate joint endeavours at the country level, by linking UN country programming activities, to which UNESCO contributes as part of UN country teams, with AoC national plans;
6. Coordinate their respective efforts at the regional levels;
7. When considered appropriate by both Parties, initiate and implement joint action in post-conflict and post-disaster situations to facilitate reconciliation and contribute to peace-building and the rebuilding of the social, cultural and intellectual fabric of afflicted societies and countries through dialogue approaches;
8. In accordance with the applicable rules of procedure and decisions taken by the competent bodies of each Party concerning the attendance of

meetings, UNESCO and UNAOC shall mutually invite each other to send representatives to meetings and conferences convened by them, falling on matters falling within the scope of this MoU;

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#### **Article IV – Areas of Dialogue Initiatives**

##### **IV. 1. Developing educational, cultural and scientific contents that reinforce dialogue and mutual understanding**

Contemporary multicultural societies benefit from the sharing of knowledge and values. Both Parties are committed to formal and non-formal education, exchange, and dialogue which are important means to counteract ethnic, cultural and religious prejudices, to foster tolerance and respect, especially in multi-ethnic and multi-religious contexts, and to fight against all forms of discrimination, racism and xenophobia. Pertinent action by both Parties will include:

- (i) Development and dissemination of educational, cultural, and scientific content to foster the acceptance and recognition of cultural diversity, including multilingualism and religious beliefs;
- (ii) Development and dissemination of regional, sub-regional and national plans of action within the framework of the World Programme for Human Rights Education and also via national, sub-regional and/or regional plans for inter-cultural dialogue, including interreligious dialogue;
- (iii) Revision of school textbooks and production of educational materials with a view to preventing school violence, promoting peace, understanding and respecting diverse cultures, and learning to live together through a variety of means and initiatives;
- (iv) Development of competences in teacher training for intercultural education, including in-service teacher training and community outreach;
- (v) Build synergies and undertake joint efforts related to the development of the AoC Marketplace of Ideas and support for innovators in intercultural dialogue
- (vi) Advocacy for exchange programmes with special emphasis on a) exchanges between universities and research institutions among various regions and b) exchanges between universities and research institutions among industrialised and developing countries as well as among developing countries (South-South cooperation);



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- (vii) Intercultural peace education, promoting knowledge about religions, ethics education, tolerance education, and civic education;
  - (viii) Development of clearing houses and collaboration on existing clearinghouses, and networks on best practice in the above-mentioned areas.
  - (ix) Creation of as global UNESCO-UNAOC Educational Network of institutions with research competences in areas of intercultural dialogue;
  - (x) The "Intercultural Vademecum" Initiative - funded from extra-budgetary funds provided by the Government of Spain, launched together with the Anna Lindh Foundation in 2008, it is composed of five distinct projects, which aim at enhancing mutual understanding and strengthening ties between societies in the Muslim/Arab and European societies and which will be included in the Action Plan for the AoC Regional Strategy for the Mediterranean. Annex I contains detailed descriptions of these projects. All projects are planned to be completed by end 2010 or early 2011.

#### **IV.2. Intensifying intercultural exchanges among youth**

Intercultural exchanges between youth are an efficient part of the effort to overcome cultural barriers and to emphasize the value of intercultural awareness. The Parties are committed to joint efforts advocating for youth and student exchanges, cultural and artistic activities, as well as civic engagement projects, which are conducive to the promotion of intercultural understanding and respect for diversity. Initiatives considered under this area may include the following:

- (i) Collaboration for the promotion and expansion of the Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations (GYMAOC) which seeks to mobilize and engage new participants and audiences in fostering knowledge and the practice of intercultural and interfaith dialogue, as well as to raise the visibility of young people's contribution to these objectives and to mobilize supporters for the Movement;
- (ii) Exchange or combine lists of youth and student partners and ensure their broad inclusion in programming;
- (iii) Undertake jointly global initiatives for outreach and dissemination (through Internet, screenings, events) of videos from PLURAL +, a youth-produced video festival on migration, diversity and social cohesion, as part of the Parties' initiatives relevant to the *International Year of Youth*;

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- (iv) Collaboration in the context of the UNAOC Youth Website, such as through the submission of articles and issues for debate and discussions by youth on the on-line forum; the promotion of UNESCO youth initiatives and integration of specific UNESCO material relevant for youth and intercultural understanding;

#### **IV.3. Highlighting the role of the media in fostering dialogue and mutual understanding**

Founded on mutual respect and understanding, dialogue constitutes the best way to overcome ignorance and promote tolerance and peace. The media are in a strategic position to promote a broad-based dialogue when they have the necessary freedom and independence to do so. They have a vital role to play in shaping perceptions of other cultures and religions and therefore carry a unique responsibility for the promotion and acceptance of tolerance around the world.

Fostering an enabling environment that allows critical views to be broadcast and published, including those generated by minorities and other marginalized segments of society, will therefore be critical. Initiatives considered under this area may include the following:

- (i) Consolidation and expansion of the network of universities "UNESCO UNITWIN/ AoC Chairs on Media and Information Literacy for Intercultural Dialogue", linked to the UNESCO/AoC/European Commission inventory "Mapping World Media Education Policies" offering a framework for national, regional and international policies in this field;
- (ii) Collaboration in the further development of UNESCO's "teacher-training curricula for media and information literacy";
- (iii) Promotion of the online resource GlobalExpertFinder.org and expansion of the list of experts involved;
- (iv) Promotion of cross-cultural reporting through the joint organization of journalist training programmes, in partnership with international journalism associations;
- (v) Promotion of an Internet-based dialogue where diverse cultural and linguistic practices can be shared through, *inter alia*, the "UNESCO Power of Peace Network", which is open-ended, participatory and inclusive, building upon a multi-stakeholder approach and seeks to uphold and promote fundamental principles of freedom of expression;
- (vi) Mobilization of strategic partnerships for media development through international initiatives, such as the UNESCO International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC).



## Article V. Cooperation among the Parties on high-level and other events in 2010 and 2011

During 2010, UNESCO and AoC will engage in a mutually supportive and visible manner during the:

- Third Forum of the Alliance of Civilization (Rio de Janeiro, 28-29 May 2010), where UNESCO was invited to lead plenary session on 29 May on the theme "Education for an intercultural citizenship", which will cover education, cultural diversity and democracy/participatory aspects within an interdisciplinary approach.
  - Joint event to highlight the constructive and creative role of dialogue among cultures during the Shanghai World Expo 2010 on the theme of "Better Cities, Better Life";
  - First global conference of the GYMAOC in Baku, October 2010;
  - AoC 1<sup>st</sup> Regional Conference for the Mediterranean, to be held in Malta in the fall 2010;
  - Meeting of the UNESCO High Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures to celebrate the end of the ongoing International Year of Rapprochement of Cultures (planned for UN Headquarters, New York in autumn 2010), during which AoC will be invited to showcase the results achieved in the project "education about religions and belief clearinghouse - and online network" ;
- (vii) Joint training workshop with journalists of the South-East-Europe region during the last quarter of 2010.

During 2011, UNESCO and AoC will engage in a mutually supportive and visible manner in, inter alia, the following activities:

- "Youth as the Future of Rapprochement" event in celebration of the *International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding*, focussing on how children and young people view the role of education in 'rapprochement', at a venue and date yet to be determined. This event will seek to encourage dialogue and understanding across generations and promoting the ideals of peace, respect for human rights and freedoms, and solidarity;
- International follow-up event to the Copenhagen Conference on Education for Intercultural Understanding and Dialogue (21-22 October 2008), attended by leaders of all the multilateral organisations involved in the dialogue among cultures;



- Fourth Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations scheduled for 2011 in Doha, including the Youth Events organized on the margins of the Forum.
- Collaboration in the organization of the first conference of UNESCO UNITWIN/AoC Chairs on Media and Information Literacy in early 2011.

#### **Article VI – Conditions and Modalities**

- VI.1.** Neither Party shall use the name and/or emblem of the other Party without prior written permission. In all circumstances both Parties shall refrain from using the name and/or emblem of the other Party in a way that implies that they are part of the other Party or under its patronage or affiliation.
- VI.2.** The Parties will consult with relevant governmental authorities or governing bodies, as appropriate, in implementing the cooperation foreseen under the present MoU.
- VI.3.** The present MoU may be amended, at any time, upon the formal written request by one Party and written confirmation of the other Party.
- VI.4.** Each Party's obligations under the present MoU shall be subject to: a) the application of its respective rules and policies; and b) the availability of the appropriate financial and other resources.

#### **Article VII – Duration and Termination**

- VII.1.** The present MoU shall take effect upon its signature by the Parties and shall expire two years after the date of signature. It can be extended or amended.
- VII.2.** Either Party may terminate the present MoU by giving two months written notice to the other Party.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, the duly authorized representatives of the Parties affix their signatures below on the two original copies in English

For UNESCO:



Irina Bokova  
Director-General

For the Alliance of Civilizations:



Jorge Sampaio  
High Representative of the United Nations  
Secretary-General for the Alliance of  
Civilizations

Dated: 29 May 2010

Dated: 29 May 2010



## ANNEX I

### Ongoing projects funded by the Government of Spain

- (1) "*A scientific, philosophical, literary and artistic anthology of Muslim/Arab civilization and its contribution to the revival of Western philosophy and culture*". The anthology (French, English, Arabic and Spanish) is designed as an educational tool – a kind of *vademecum* – for teachers, students, and the general public alike, presenting an intercultural vision of history that unites the Muslim/Arab world and the West.
- (2) "*A philosophical look at Muslim/Arab civilization: accounts of routes, encounters, bridges and dialogues*". The project entails the production of educational tools that aim to illustrate instances of dialogue and exchanges within and through Muslim/Arab civilization. This material will present an intercultural vision of architecture and urbanism that links the Arab-Islamic and Western worlds, and highlights the exchanges and mutual influence, focusing on selected moments in time as well as on emblematic places and figures.
- (3) "*Illuminating Interrelations and Engaging Dialogues: Museums as a Civic Space for Developing Intercultural Skills*". The project comprises two pilot activities: a) "Common Heritage: A museological and educational approach to researching the part played by others in a culture", in cooperation with museum(s) located in the Euro-Mediterranean region, and b) the design of *an itinerary for a thematic visit* to be included in the standard presentation of the museum.
- (4) "*Young Artists for Intercultural Dialogue between the Arab and Western Worlds*". The project gives recognition to young artists for their creative achievement(s) (regardless of the nature of the art work) in favour of Arab/Western dialogue, in bestowing them with an honorary title of "Young artists for intercultural dialogue between Arab and Western worlds". The selection criteria are being formulated on the basis of UNESCO's experience with prizes and awards.
- (5) "*The Power of Peace Network: Reporting for Peace*" (PPN). The PPN is an interactive platform that seeks to harness innovative mechanisms to promote peace through media and information and communication technologies. PPN fosters global collaboration in the use of the tools of information and communication for cultural self-expression, mutual understanding, the reduction of conflict incidents, and the support of sustainable living. In this framework the AoC initiative entitled "network of Dialogue cafés" may be taken into consideration.